

The military refuses to recognize the will of the Burmese people—made exceedingly clear in past elections, and most recently in the demonstrations we all saw this Fall. The people plead for human rights and an end to the junta's power. Instead, these thugs have cracked down even harder with their customary persecution and bloodshed.

The Congressional Medal of Honor was originally awarded to military leaders for achievement in battle. Ms. Suu Kyi and the Burmese people are currently waging their own battle—a peaceful one—based on democratic ideals that all Americans share with them. Let's honor Ms. Suu Kyi for this peaceful struggle, and send a message to her brutal captors and to the world, that we stand with her and her people.

TRIBUTE TO CHERITH NORMAN

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deep appreciation for Cherith Norman's service to our country as senior congressional adviser in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. I have had the privilege of getting to know Cherith during her time as senior congressional adviser in the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs on budget and appropriations issues. She is one of the best congressional liaisons from the State Department that I have worked with during my entire time in office. I have been deeply impressed by her work ethic and commitment to serving the United States government. She is conscientious, dedicated, and quick-thinking, and has been a tremendous asset to both me and my staff.

Cherith worked for Senator JIM DEMINT for 6 years while he was a U.S. Representative and also during his congressional campaign. She worked at the State Department for 4 years, serving as a political appointee since 2003 in the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. During her time at the State Department, Cherith has served as interlocutor between the appropriators and the department on critical spending issues; planned countless congressional member and staff trips overseas; coordinated with the White House, National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget and other Executive Branch agencies to present the President's international affairs budget to Congress each year; advised senior State Department officials on policy and funding strategy for international programs and State Department operations, and, in a courteous, conscientious and efficient manner, facilitated clear communication between Congress and the State Department.

Cherith is moving to New York to serve on the staff of Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad in the U.S. mission to the United Nations. Cherith's strong work ethic and selfless attitude have been the hallmarks of her service to our government and to the department, and I believe that she will serve the State Department very well in this new capacity. I know I am joined by many of my colleagues in the House of Representatives in expressing our appreciation for her work here in Washington, our sadness at her departure, and our best

wishes for her future endeavors in our mission to the United Nations.

INTRODUCING THE BROADCAST LICENSING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST ACT

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker. I think there is a lack of quality civic dialog taking place in our country today. Our news has become homogenized and formulaic and there is a persistent dumbing down of national issues. The corporatization of media and the massive consolidation of our media outlets have made broadcasters less responsive to their local audiences. This has eroded public discourse in our country, and this has an impact on the health of our democracy.

Last month Congress held a joint session to hear French President Nicolas Sarkozy. In his remarks he celebrated the life of the great French political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville. In his seminal work *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville marveled at the diversity and number of newspapers and journals in America. He believed that there was a symbiotic relationship between a democracy and the media when he said that there "is a necessary connection between public associations and newspapers: Newspapers make associations, and associations make newspapers." A healthy democracy, according to de Tocqueville, needs a strong diverse media. The diversity that de Tocqueville extolled has been in precipitous decline, a fact that has not been lost on the 70 percent of Americans that believe that media consolidation has gone too far.

Two major conglomerates control two-thirds of the national radio market. Increasingly, "local broadcasts" are voice tracked or recorded remotely and passed off as live local broadcasts. Four out of ten commercial TV stations surveyed in 2003 aired no local public affairs programs; 92 percent of the election coverage aired by the national networks in the 2 weeks before Election Day 2004 was devoted to the Presidential contest, leaving only 8 percent for local elections and referendums. Slightly less than 2 percent of stories were devoted to the U.S. House or Senate races, and an additional 2 percent examined ballot initiatives or referenda. These are but a few startling facts that demonstrate the crisis.

The perils of media consolidation are not just theoretical—they've manifested in a failure of broadcasters to serve in the public interest. At 2 a.m. on January 18, 2002, there was a train derailment in Minot, ND. All six commercial radio stations in Minot were owned by the same broadcaster, yet when emergency responders tried to reach somebody at the stations to air emergency warnings and instructions, nobody responded. Clear Channel was voice tracking its broadcast in Minot. Over 240,000 gallons of a hazardous material—anhydrous ammonia—were leaked. One person was killed. 110 were immediately treated, and more than 1,000 people needed medical care in the months that followed.

The consolidation we've witnessed has coincided with the erosion of public interest stand-

ards imposed on broadcasters. The idea that broadcasters are public fiduciaries has been lost. I believe relaxed ownership rules and rubber-stamped postcard license renewals have contributed to this degradation. The public interest standard was created out of a compromise between civic groups and broadcasters. Broadcasters wanted editorial control, while civic groups in the 1920s wanted broadcasters to be regulated as common carriers. As a compromise, broadcasters were given editorial control but were also required to serve the "public interest, convenience and necessity." When a broadcaster receives a license they are investing in public responsibility and service. This responsibility should not be reduced to a postcard. Broadcasters must demonstrate that they are meeting the needs of their community. We need to reinvigorate the public interest requirement on broadcasters.

I'm introducing legislation today entitled the Broadcast Licensing in the Public Interest Act. This legislation attempts to put new life in the public interest standard. First, the bill reduces a broadcast license term from 8 years to 3. The 3-year term will bring greater oversight and scrutiny to license renewals. Second, the bill requires broadcast licensees to demonstrate that they have made a dedication to the civic affairs of its community and to local news gathering. The bill also mandates that broadcasters air locally produced programming and make a commitment to provide a public presentation of the views of candidates and issues related to local, statewide or national elections. Finally, the bill obligates that broadcasters provide quality educational programming for children. If enacted, this legislation would strengthen the public interest standard and force greater scrutiny on license renewals.

I urge members of this House to cosponsor this legislation and revive the public interest standards on broadcasters.

SUDAN ACCOUNTABILITY AND DIVESTMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, and urge its immediate passage. We are voting on language very similar to legislation that passed the House 418-1 at the end of July, which supports the decision of state and local legislators and fund managers to divest from companies doing business in Sudan. However, the bill before us today does not require the government to create or be the source of a "black list" of such companies. For that reason, the Senate version is much more acceptable to the Administration.

Some have said that today's legislation is too little, too late. This certainly may not be the case for more than a million innocent men, women, and children who have somehow survived the genocide and slaughter. We can't rewrite history or save lives already lost in Darfur. However, we can and must resolve to do better going forward. This legislation has the potential to give hundreds of thousands of